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Saji et al.

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(54) **MULTILAYER SUBSTRATE**

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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USPC 174/262-266; 361/792-795

See application file for complete search history.

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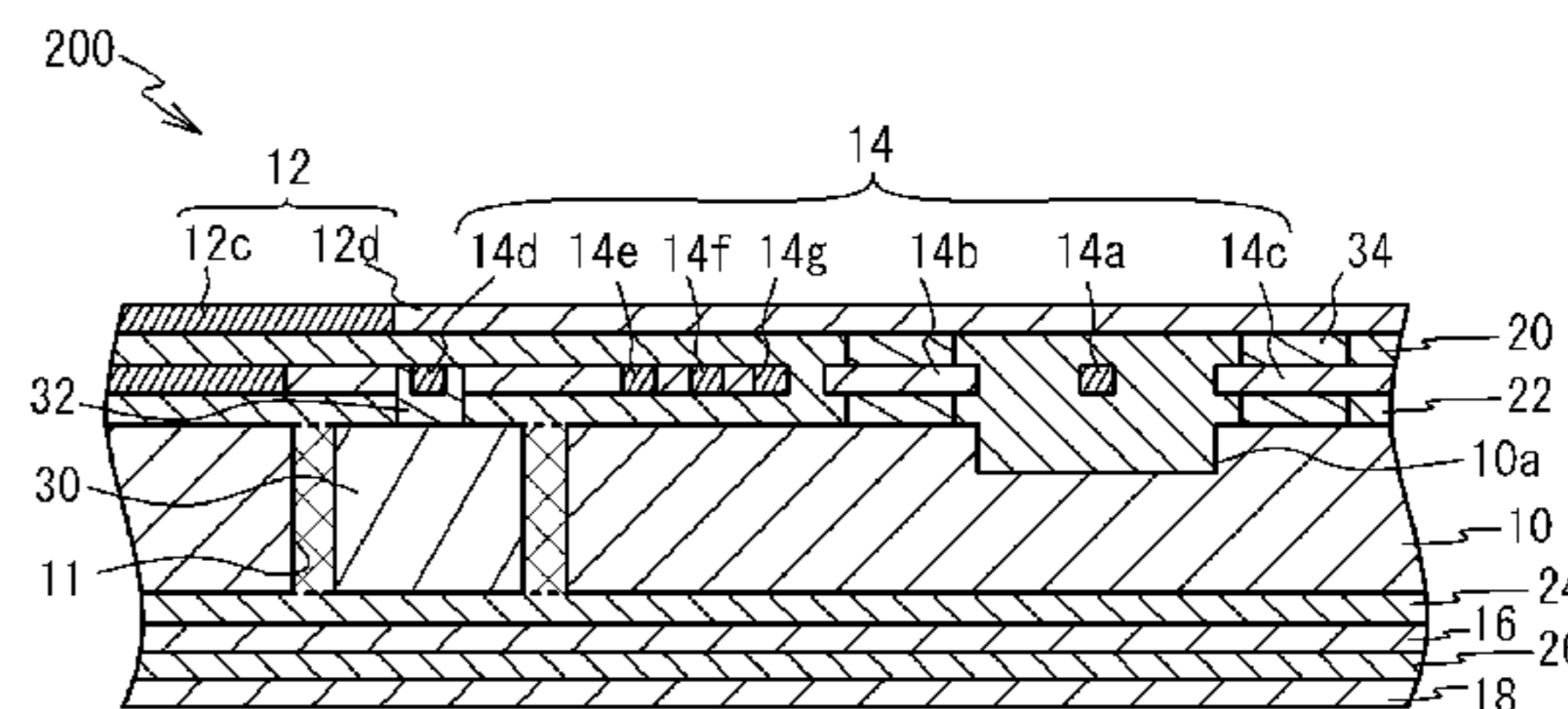
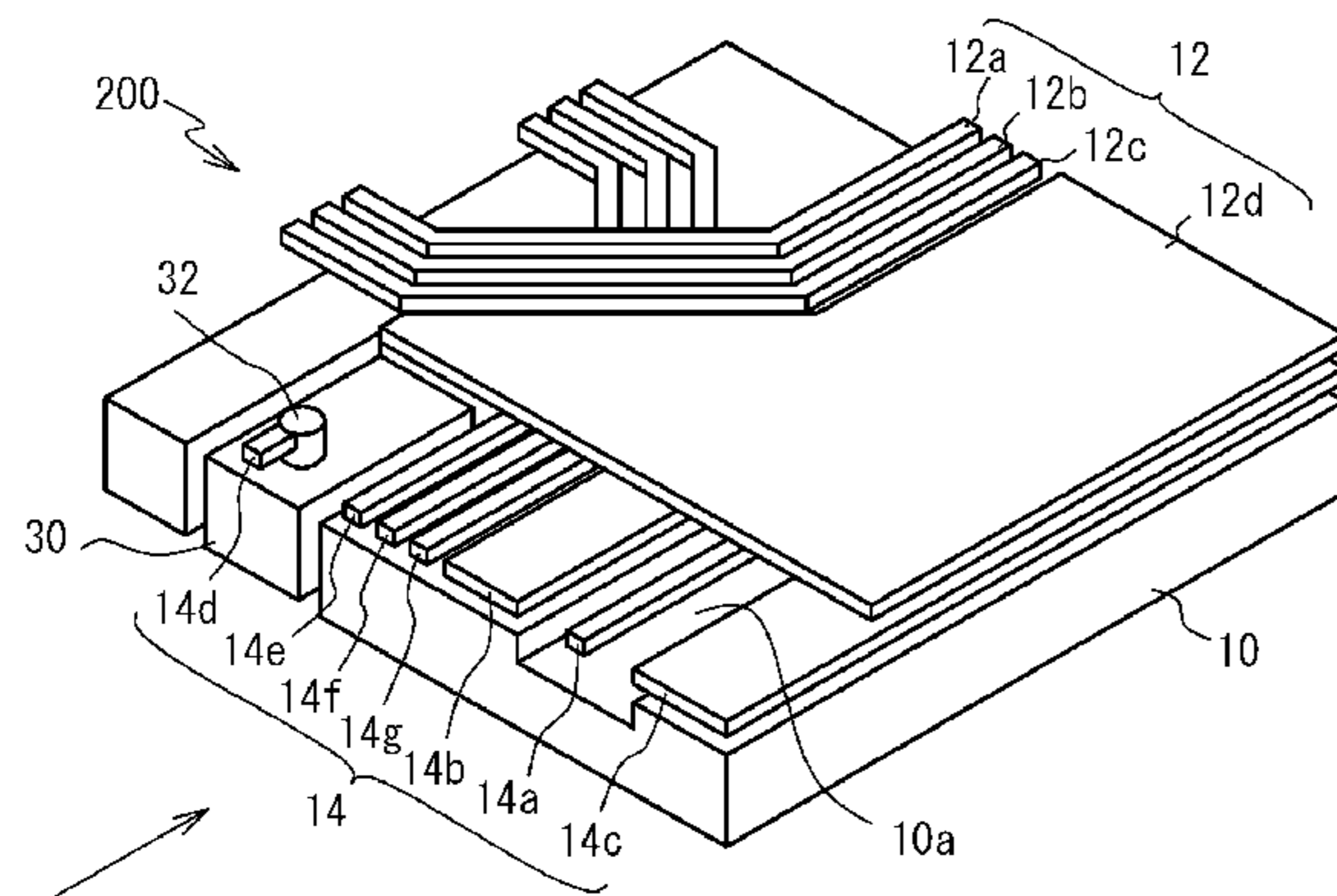
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A multilayer substrate is configured by stacking conductive layers and insulation layers. The multilayer substrate includes a core that is one of the conductive layers and is thicker than any of other conductive layers, and a first signal line that is included in the conductive layers and is adjacent to the core so that a first insulation layer that is one of the insulation layers is interposed between the core and the first signal line, the first signal line being used for transmission of an RF signal. The core has a recess portion so as to face the first signal line.

13 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



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H01P 3/00 (2006.01)
H05K 1/18 (2006.01)
H01F 17/00 (2006.01)

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CPC *H05K1/0219* (2013.01); *H05K 1/185*
 (2013.01); *H05K 2201/0338* (2013.01); *H05K*
2201/09745 (2013.01)

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FIG. 1A

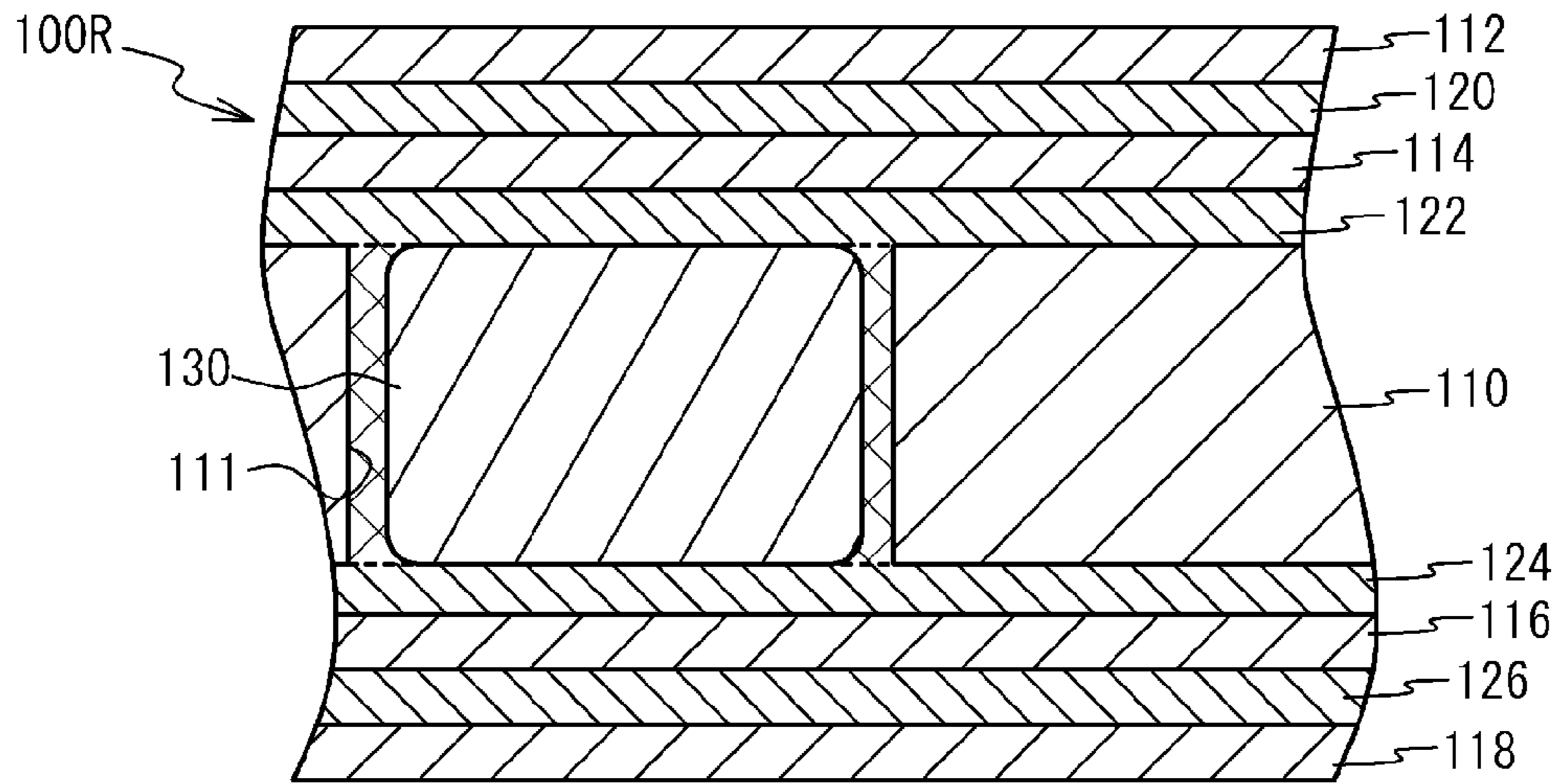


FIG. 1B

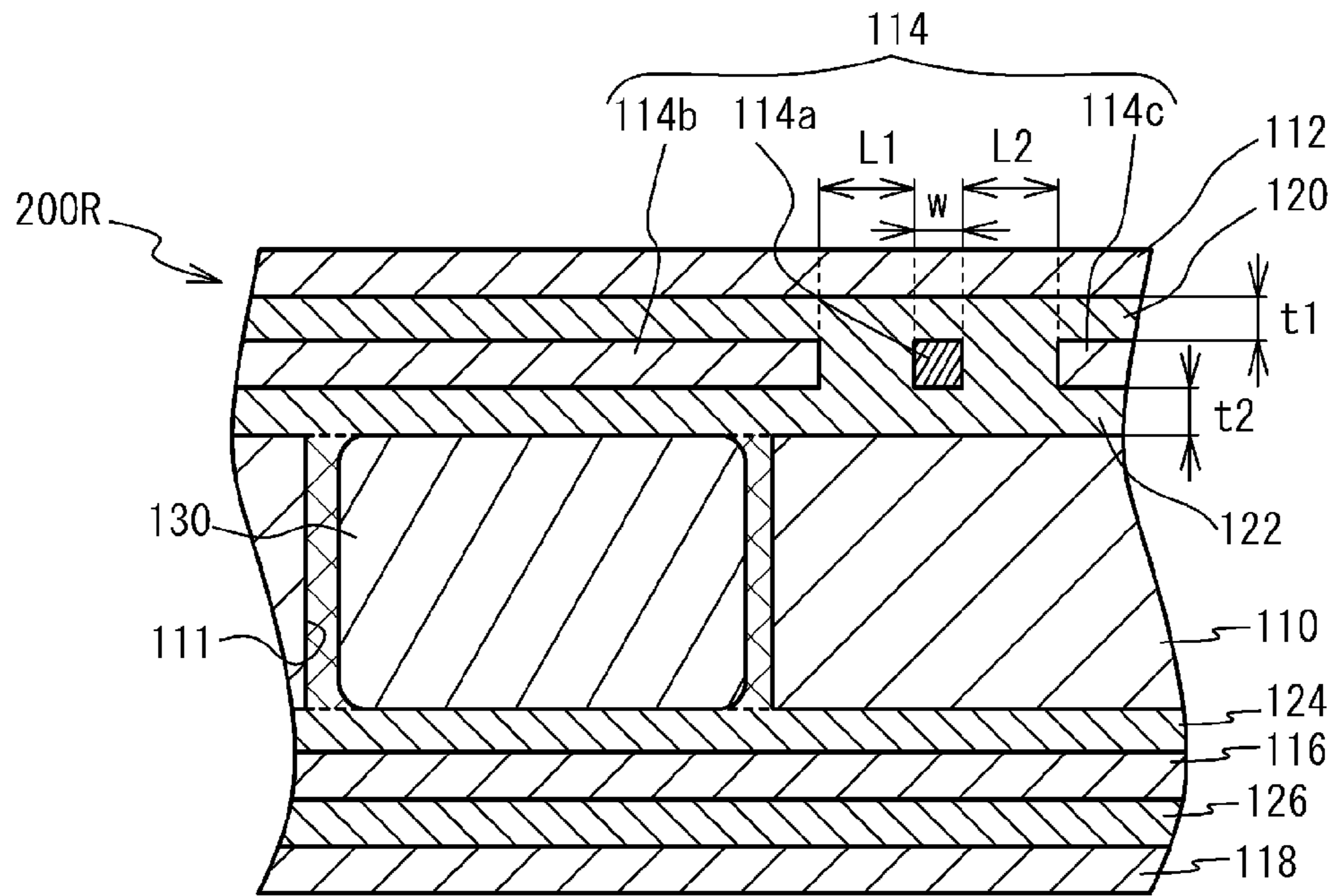


FIG. 2

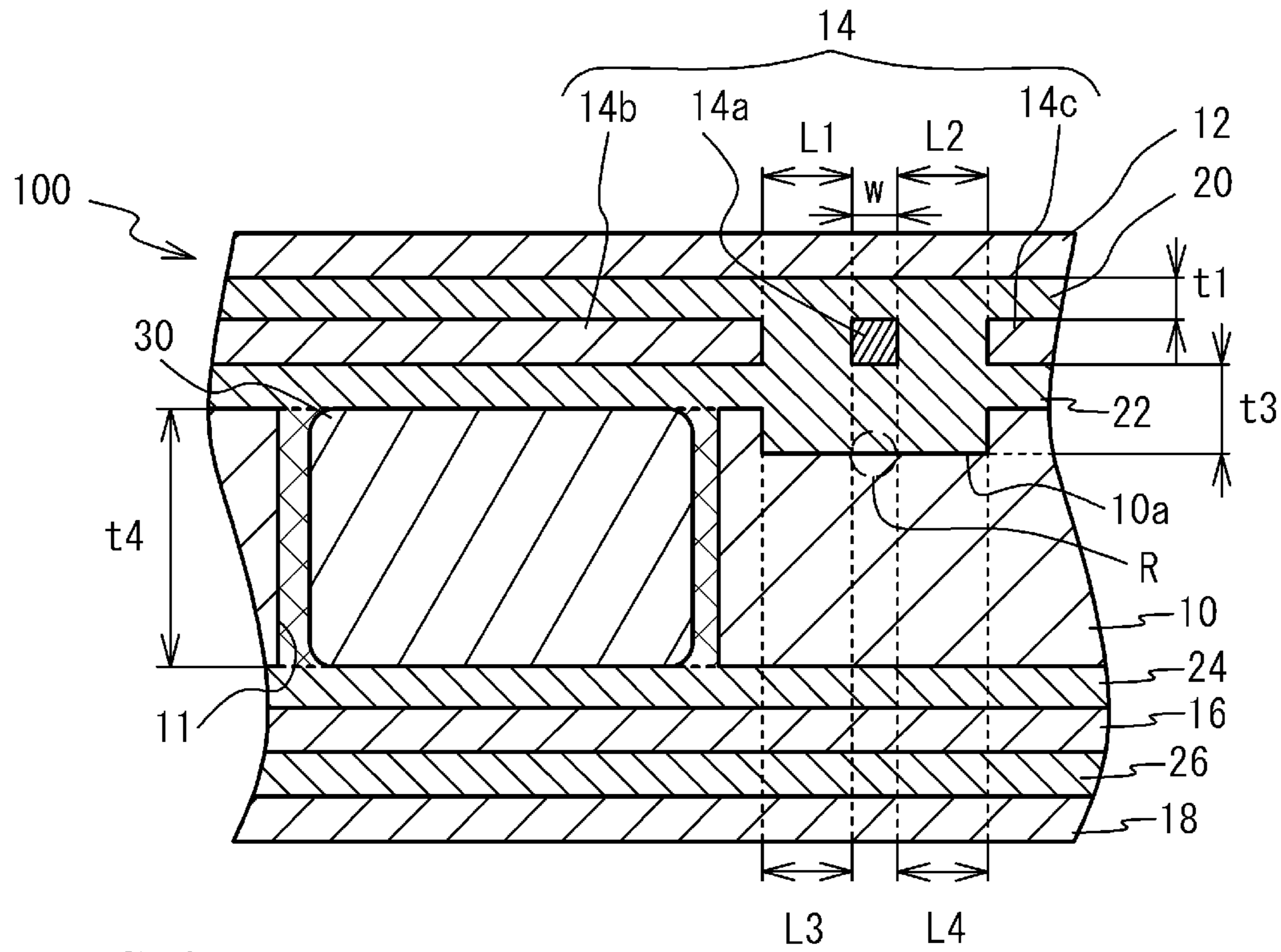


FIG. 3

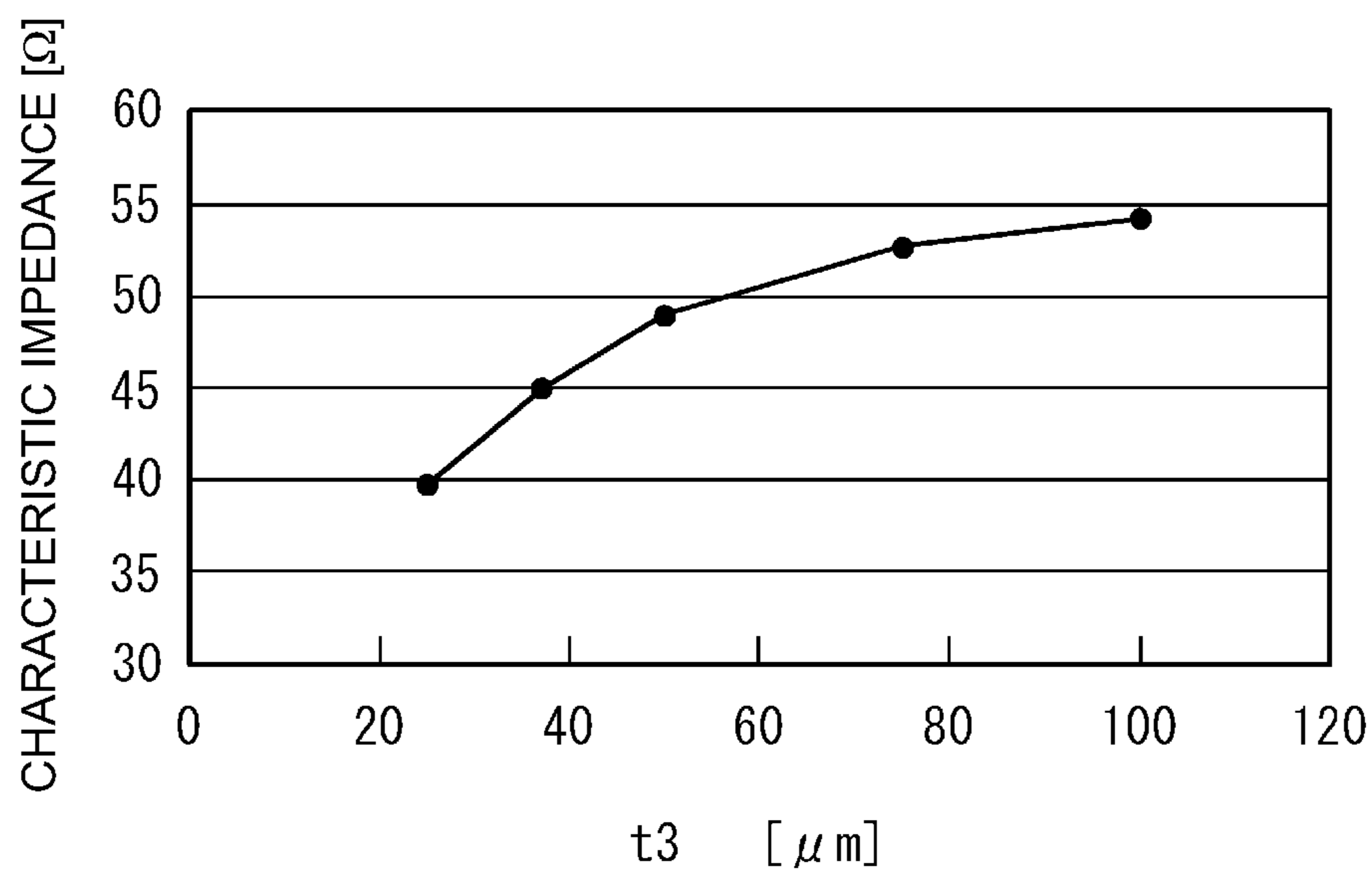


FIG. 4A

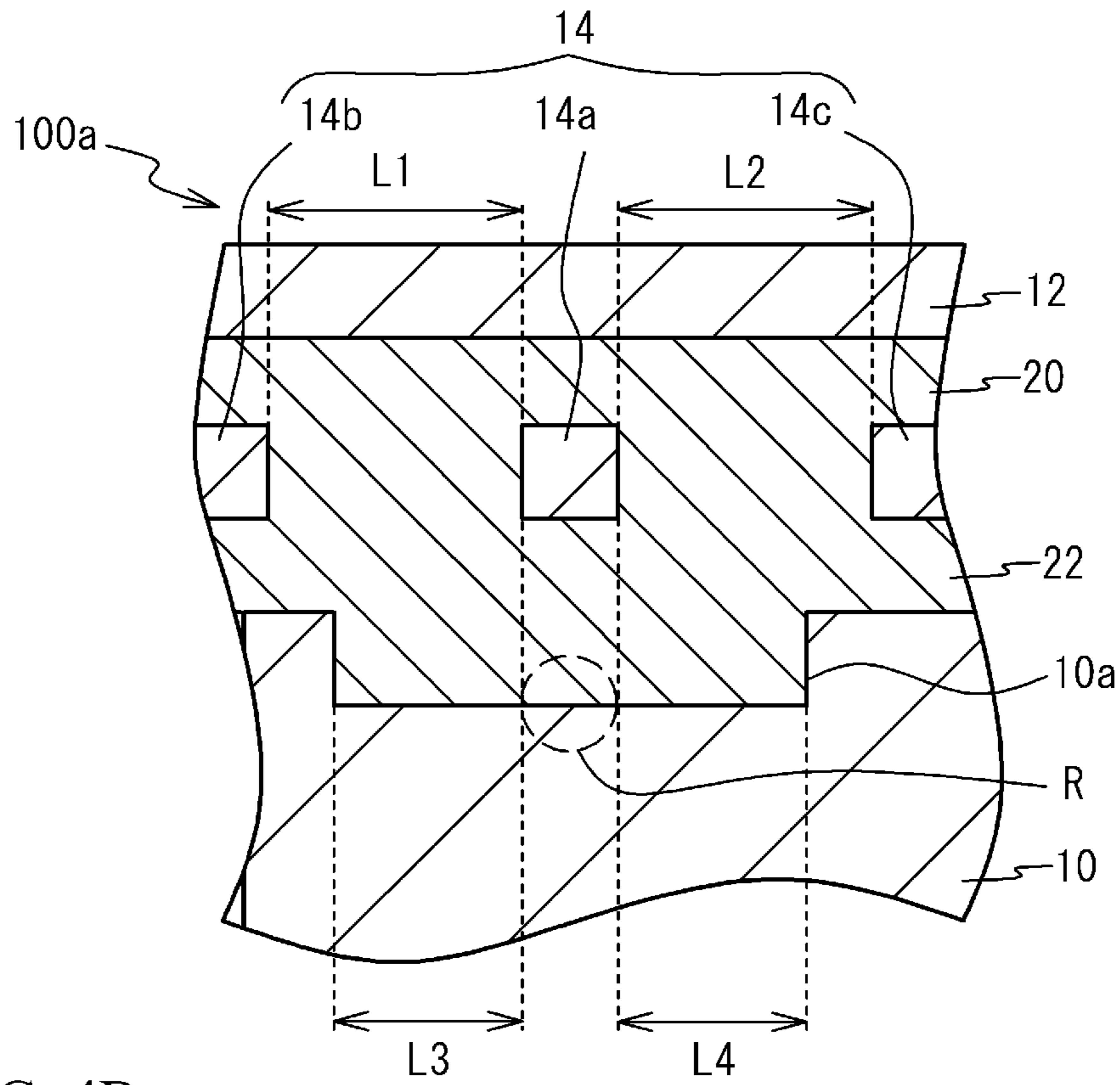


FIG. 4B

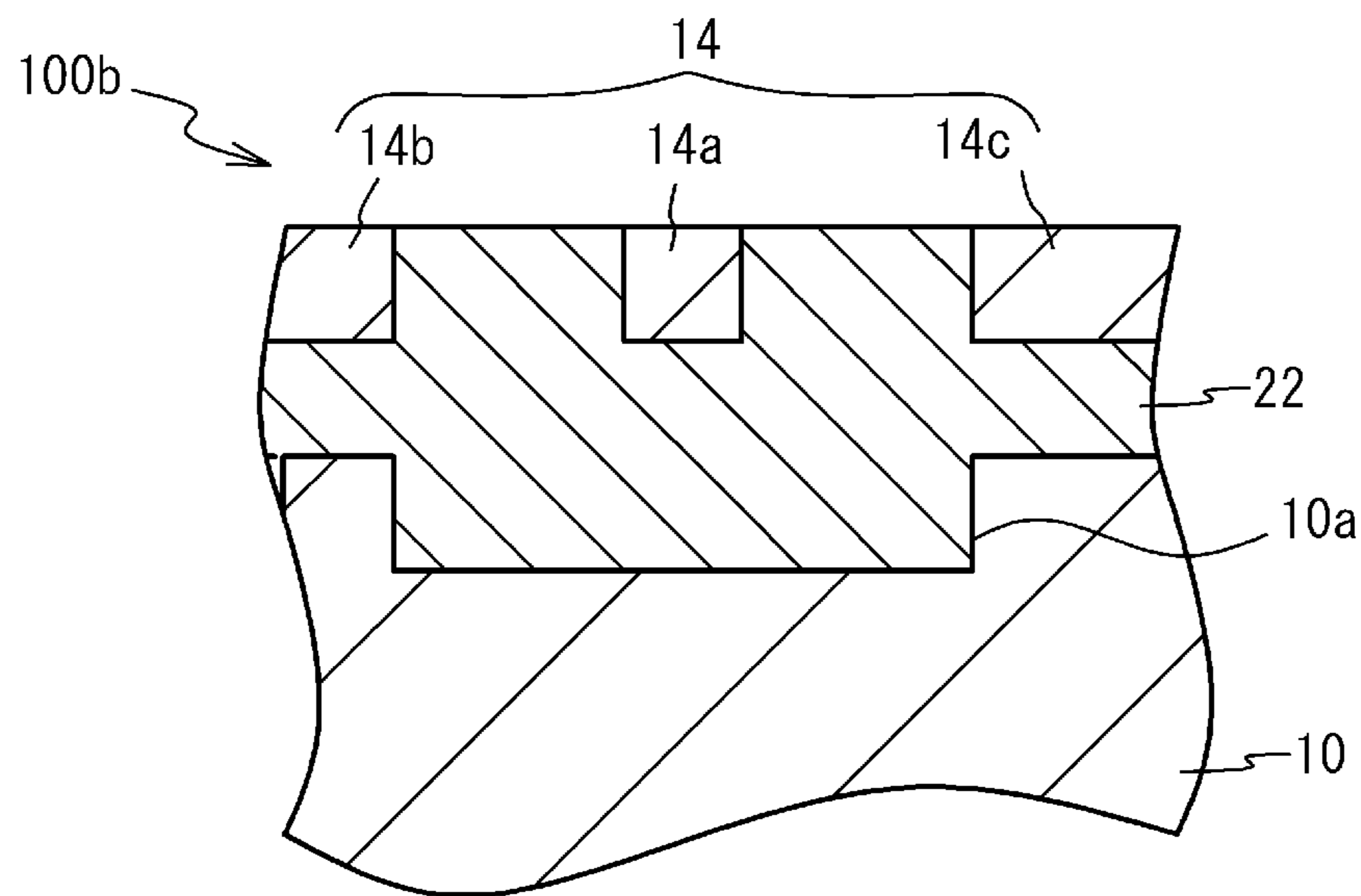


FIG. 5

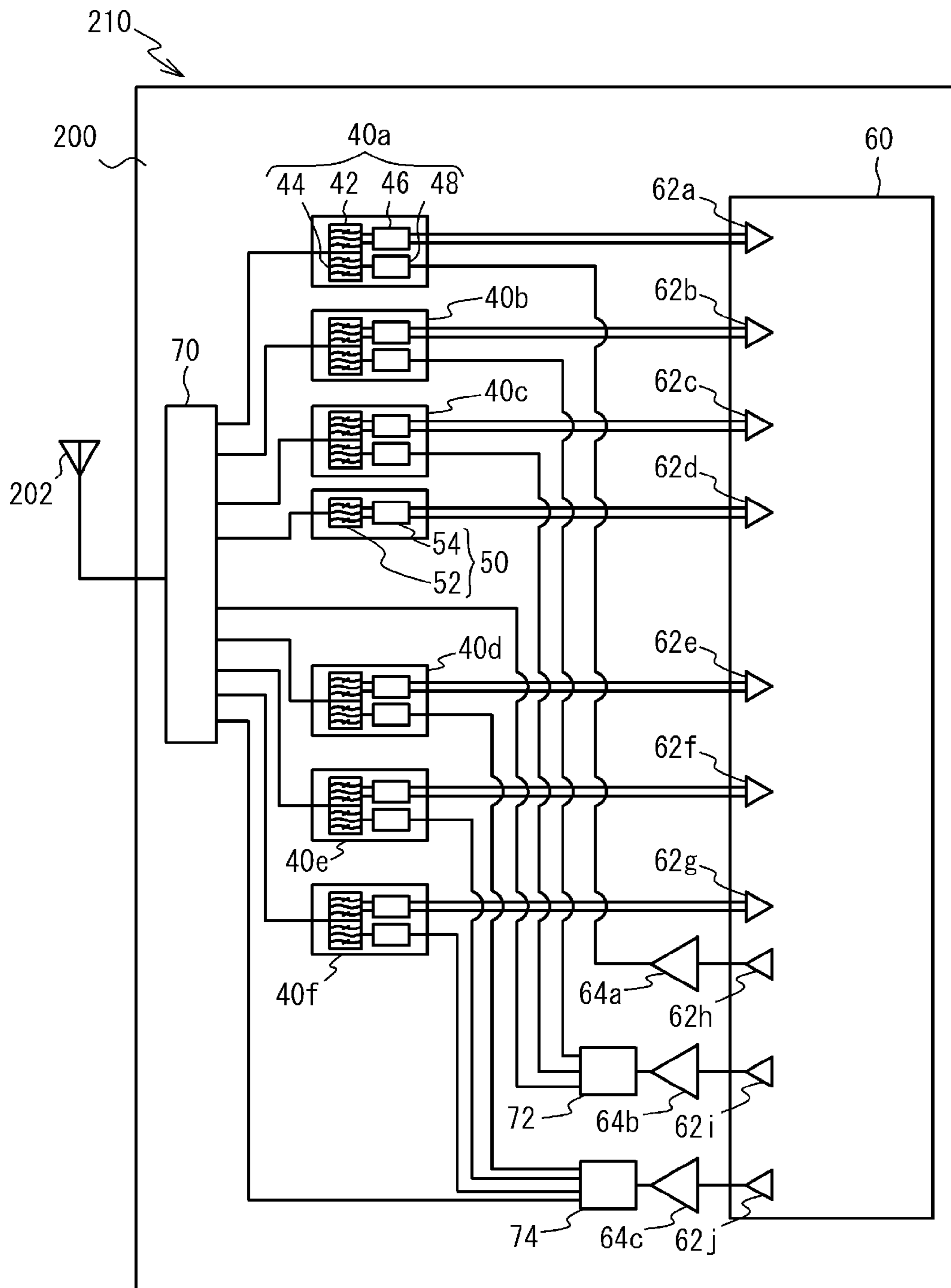


FIG. 6

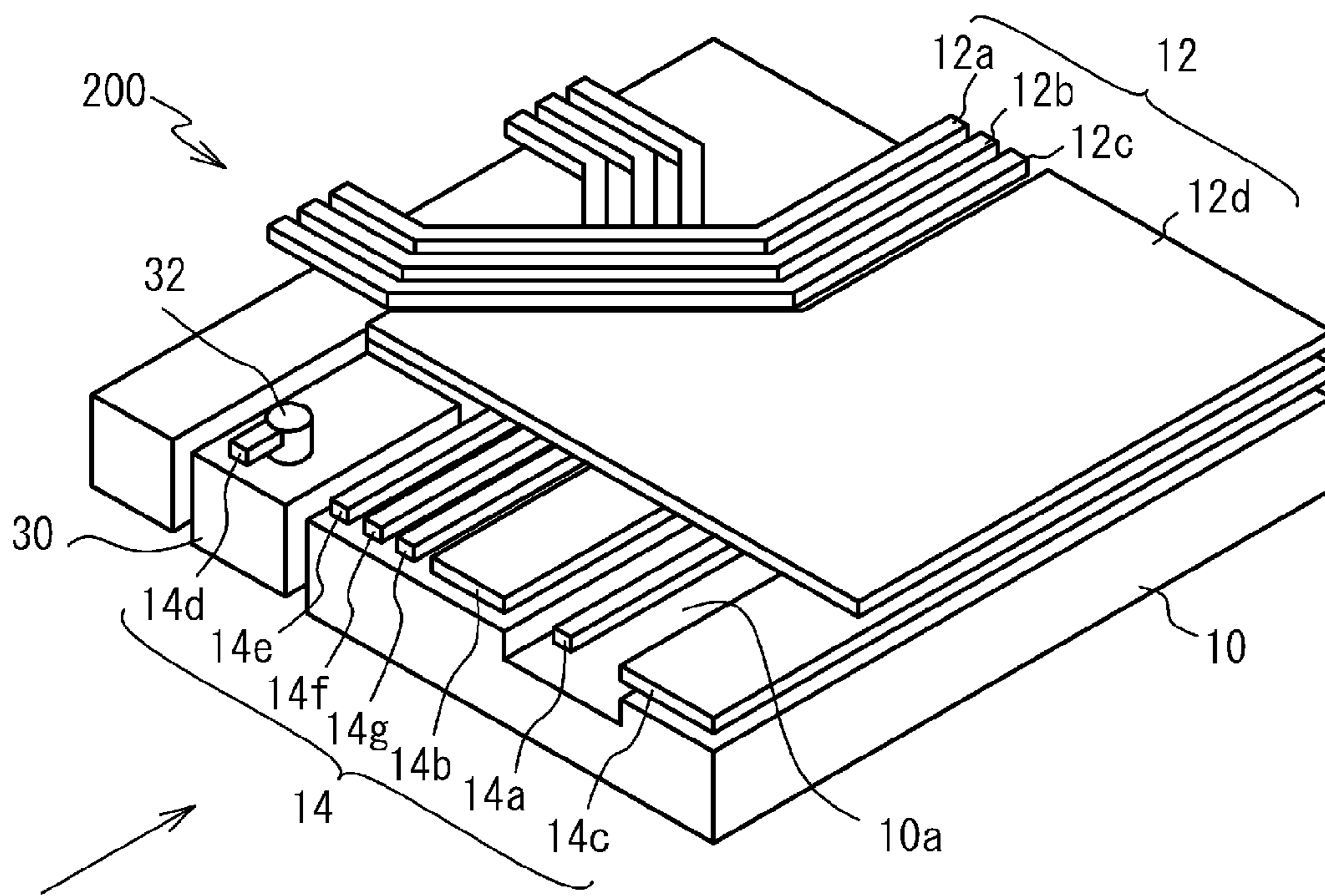


FIG. 7A

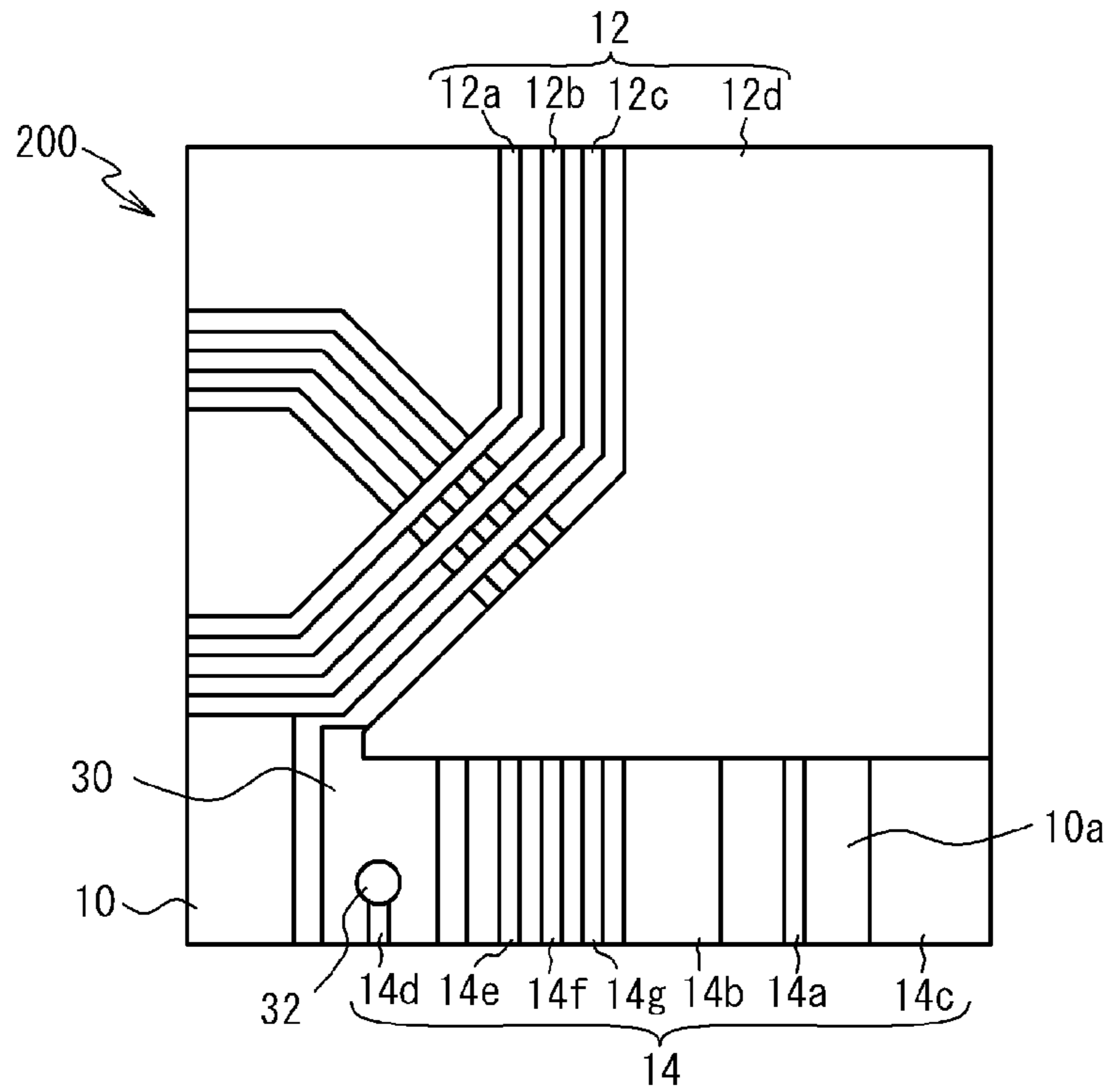


FIG. 7B

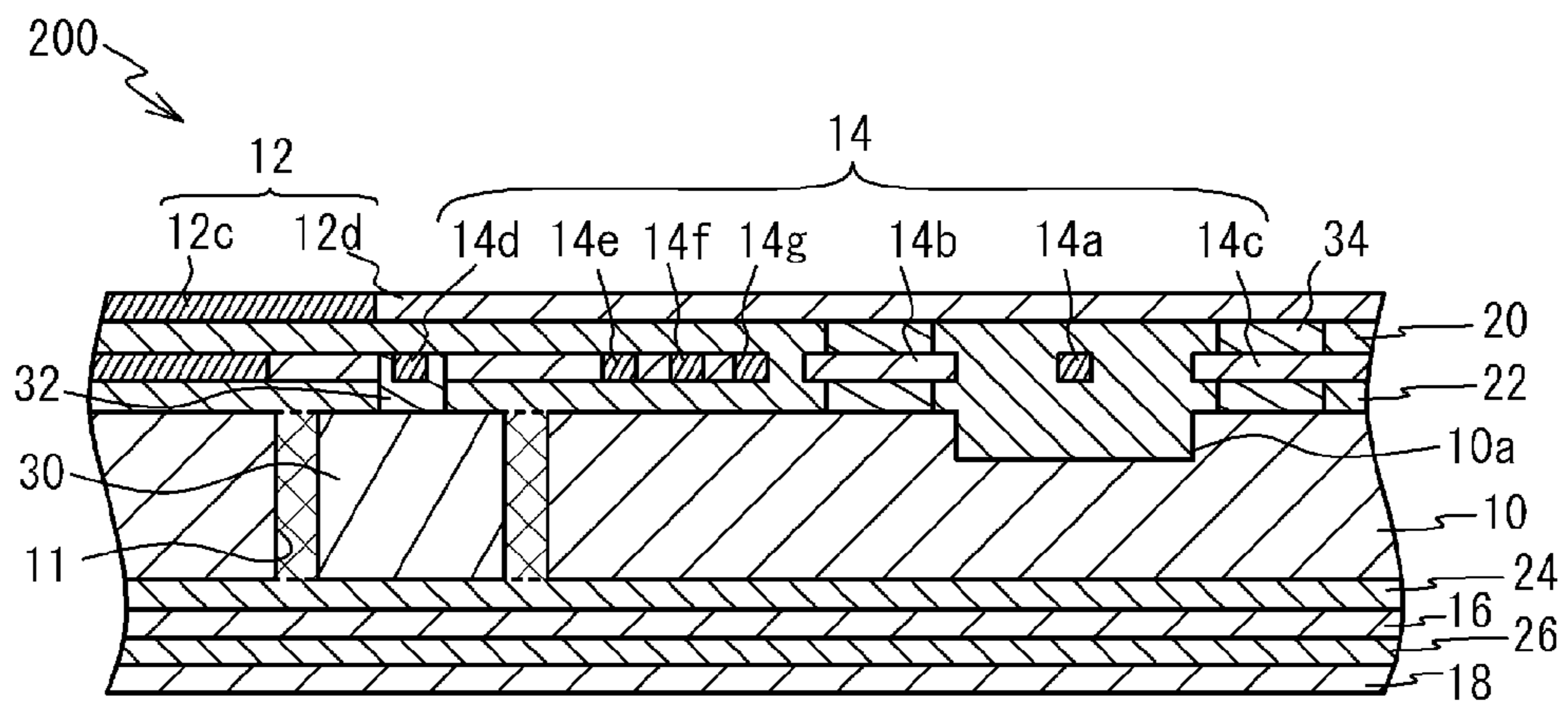


FIG. 8A

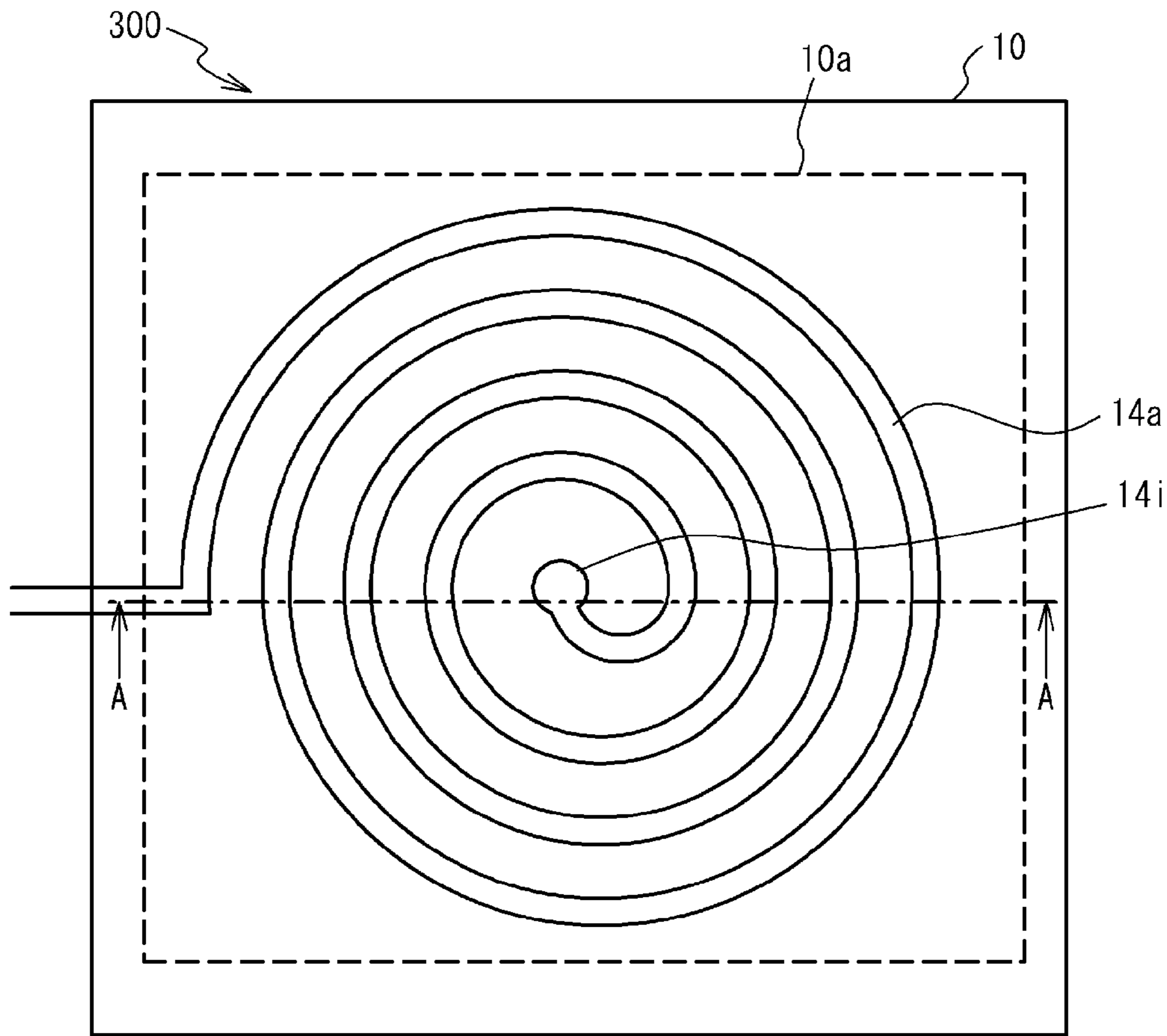


FIG. 8B

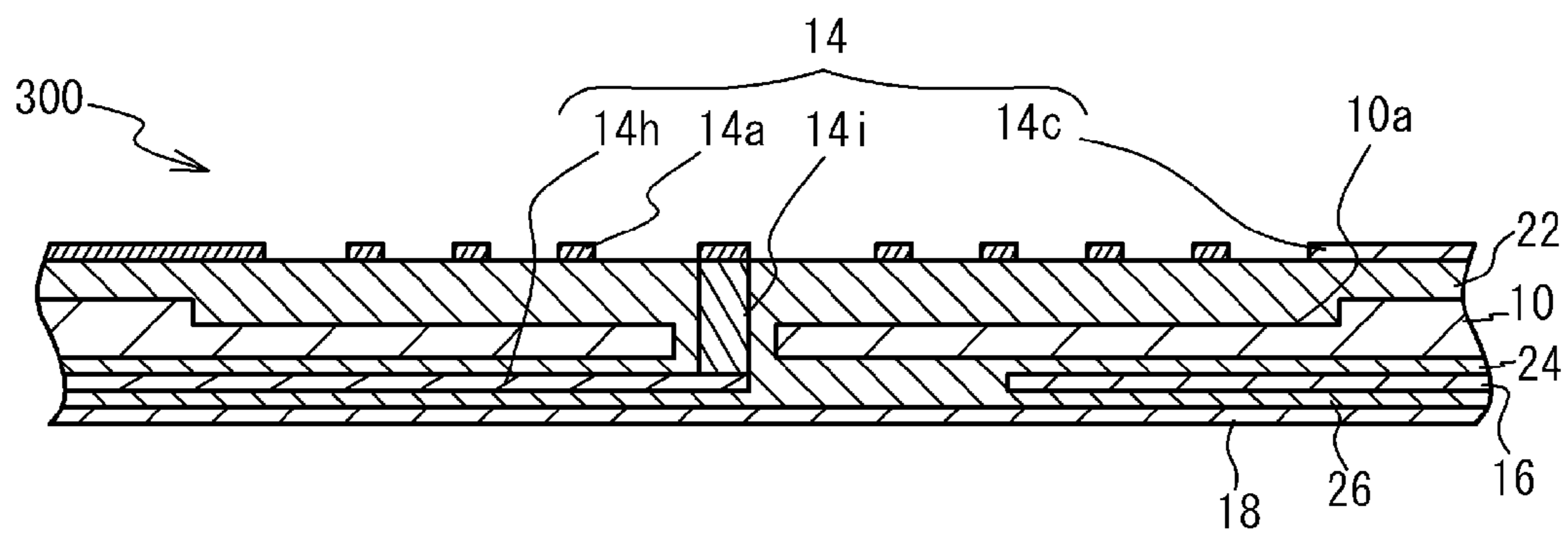


FIG. 9A

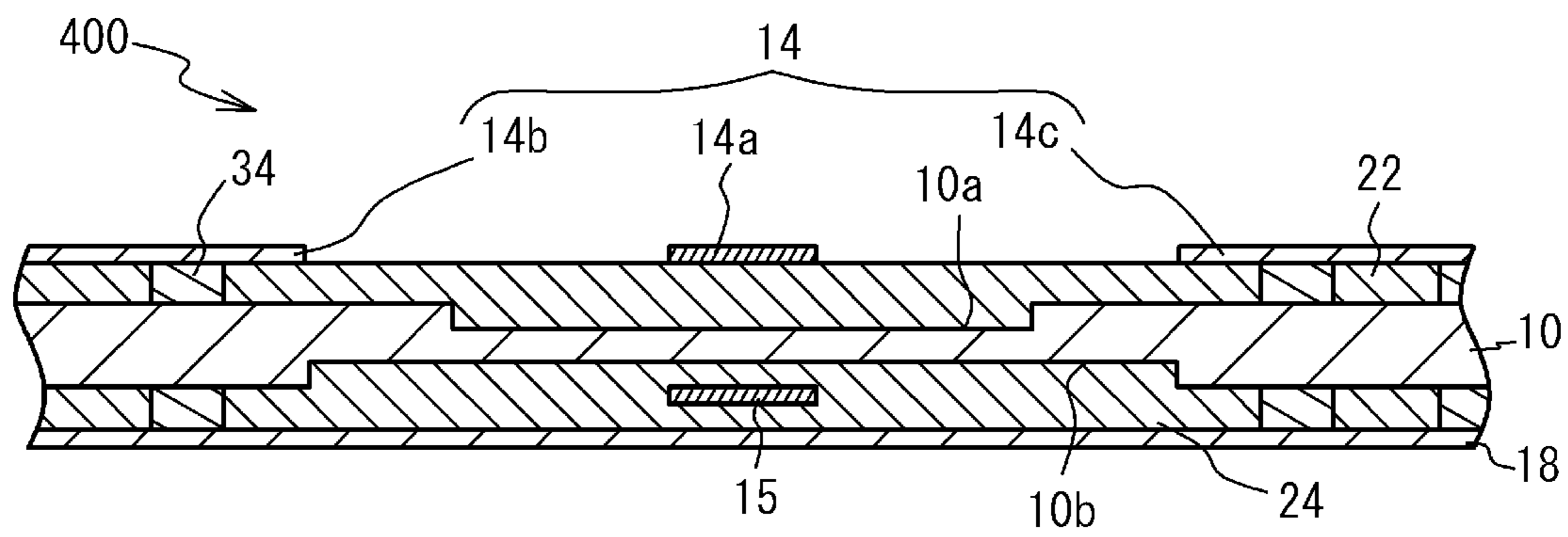
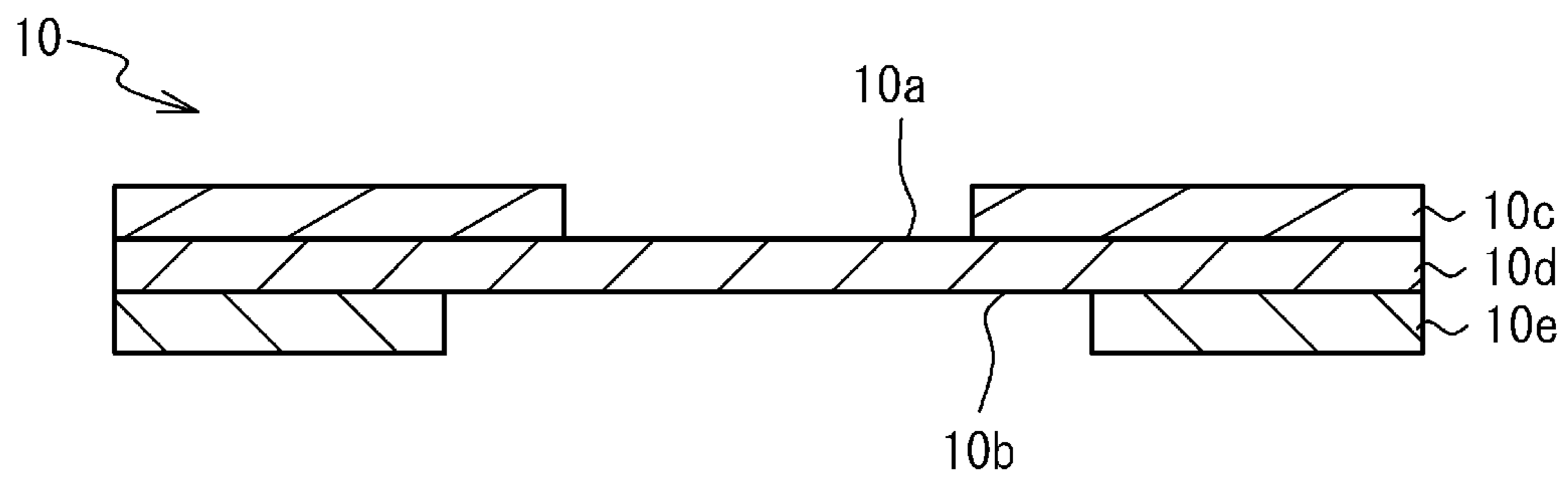


FIG. 9B



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MULTILAYER SUBSTRATE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a Continuation of a pending application, U.S. application Ser. No. 13/331,306 filed on Dec. 20, 2011, and claims the benefit of Japanese Patent Application Nos. 2011-119512 filed on May 27, 2011 and 2011-233277 filed on Oct. 24, 2011, all of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties.

FIELD

A certain aspect of the present invention relates to multilayer substrates.

BACKGROUND

Communication devices such as portable phones are being developed so as to work on multiple bands. In order to cope with multi-band working, one portable phone is equipped with RF devices that handles multiple RF signals such as filters, duplexers and amplifiers. It is desired to realize a compact module on which the RF devices are integrated in order to downsize the portable phones.

Such a compact module may use a multilayer substrate formed by stacking multiple insulation layers and multiple conductive layers. The characteristic impedance of a signal line included in a conductive layer depends on, for example the distance between related conductive layers and the dielectric constant of the insulation layer interposed between the conductive layers. For example, Japanese Patent Application Publication 2007-189152 (Document 1) discloses an art having a core of a dielectric, a ground layer that is provided between a signal layer and an outer layer and has an opening, and another ground layer that is provided in the conductive layer in which a signal layer is also provided. In this art, the characteristic impedance of the signal line depends on the distances between the outer layer and the ground layers. Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2009-81423 (Document 2) discloses a multilayer substrate having a metal core having an opening in which an electronic component is accommodated.

In the art disclosed in Document 1, a signal interference may occur between the signal layer and the outer layer via the opening formed in the ground layer. In the art disclosed in Document 2, it may be difficult to realize both a thinned multilayer substrate and a desired characteristic impedance of the signal line.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided a multilayer substrate configured so that conductive layers and insulation layers are stacked, the multilayer substrate including: a core that is one of the conductive layers and is thicker than any of other conductive layers; and a first signal line that is included in the conductive layers and is adjacent to the core so that a first insulation layer that is one of the insulation layers is interposed between the core and the first signal line, the first signal line being used for transmission of an RF signal, the core having a recess portion so as to face the first signal line.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1A is a cross-sectional view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with a comparative example 1, and FIG. 1B is

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a cross-sectional view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with a comparative example 2;

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with an embodiment 1;

FIG. 3 is a diagram that illustrates results of calculation of the multilayer substrate of the embodiment 1;

FIG. 4A is a cross-sectional view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with a first variation of the embodiment 1, and FIG. 4B is a cross-sectional view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with a second variation of the embodiment 1;

FIG. 5 is a block diagram of a module that employs a multilayer substrate in accordance with an embodiment 2;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with the embodiment 2;

FIG. 7A is a plan view of the multilayer substrate of the embodiment 2, and FIG. 7B is a cross-sectional view of the multilayer substrate of the embodiment 2;

FIG. 8A is a plan view of a multilayer substrate configured in accordance with an embodiment 3, and FIG. 8B is a cross-sectional view of the multilayer substrate of the embodiment 3; and

FIG. 9A is a cross-sectional view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with an embodiment 4, and FIG. 9B is a cross-sectional view of a core used in the multilayer substrate of the embodiment 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Now, two comparative examples 1 and 2 are described. The comparative examples 1 and 2 use a core made of a metal. FIG. 1A is a cross-sectional view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with the comparative example 1.

Referring to FIG. 1A, a multilayer substrate 100R is composed of conductive layers 112~118, insulation layers 120~126, and an electronic component 130. The conductive layer 112 is located on the upper surface of the multilayer substrate 100R. The insulation layer 120 is provided below the conductive layer 112. The conductive layer 114 is provided below the insulation layer 120. The insulation layer 122 is provided below the conductive layer 114. The core 110 is provided below the insulation layer 122. A cavity 111 is provided in the core 110. The electronic component 130 is accommodated in the cavity 111. The electronic component 130 may be accommodated so that the whole of the electronic component 130 or a part thereof is in the cavity 111. That is, at least part of the electronic component 130 is accommodated in the cavity 111. Both sides of the core 110 (left and right sides in FIG. 1A) face an opening or an insulation layer. A rear side of the core 110 connecting the opposite sides is illustrated by cross lines. The insulation layer 124 is provided below the core 110. The conductive layer 116 is provided below the insulation layer 124. The insulation layer 126 is provided below the conductive layer 116. The conductive layer 118 is provided below the insulation layer 126 and is located on the lower surface of the multilayer substrate 100R.

The core 110 and the conductive layers 112-118 are made of a metal such as copper (Cu). The insulation layers 120-126 are made of resin such as glass epoxy resin or an insulator other than resin. The electronic component 130 may be a passive component such as a filter, a capacitor or an inductor, or an active component such as an IC. The thickness of the core 110 is equal to or larger than the thickness of the electronic component 130.

The conductive layer 114 includes a signal line over which an RF signal is transmitted, and a ground layer. The core 110 and the conductive layer 112 are used as ground layer. The conductive layers 116 and 118 are used as signal lines over

which signals other than the RF signal are transmitted, or ground layers. The RF signal may be a microwave signal, for example. The RF signal may include signals having frequencies of GHz bands corresponding to W-CDMA (Wideband Code Division Multiple Access), signals having frequencies of hundreds of MHz corresponding to GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) and signals of hundreds of MHz corresponding to WCDMA. The signals other than the RF signal includes signals having frequencies ranging from, for example, a few Hz to tens of MHz, and direct current.

Since the core **110** functions as a ground layer, it is possible to suppress signal interference between the conductive layer **114** and the conductive layer **116** and that between the conductive layer **114** and the conductive layer **118**. The core **110** functions as a shield that isolates the electronic component **130** from noise. The core **110** is thicker than each of the conductive layers **112**~**118**. Since the core **110** is made of a metal and is relatively thick, the strength of the multilayer substrate **100R** is enhanced, as compared to a case where the core **110** is made of an insulator. Since the core **110** has good heat transfer performance, heat generated by the electronic component **130** is effectively transferred to the outside. The use of the core **110** made of a metal realizes suppression of signal interference and improved strength and heat transfer performance.

The core **110**, the conductive layer **112** and the conductive layer **114** may form a strip line, which is a kind of transmission line. FIG. **1B** is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary multilayer substrate having a strip line.

Referring to FIG. **1B**, the conductor **114** of a multilayer substrate **200R** includes a signal line **114a**, a ground layer **114b** and a ground layer **114c**. The ground layers **114b** and **114c** are provided at both sides of the signal line **114a** and are spaced apart from the signal line **114a**. An insulator layer, which is made of the same insulator as that of the insulator layer **120** is provided between the signal line **114a** and the ground layer **114b** and between the signal line **114a** and the ground layer **114c**. The core **110** and the conductive layers **112** and **114** form a strip line and have a predetermined characteristic impedance. The signal line **114a** functions as a line through which an RF signal flows. Strictly, a return current flows through the core **110** and the conductive layers **112** and **114**.

The characteristic impedance of the strip line mainly depends on the dimensions of the layers that form the strip line, and the dielectric constants of the insulator layers. The dimensions include the thickness **t1** of the insulator layer **120**, the thickness **t2** of the insulator layer **122**, and the width **w** of the signal line **114a**. The thickness **t1** is equal to the distance between the conductive layer **112** and the conductive layer **114**. The thickness **t2** is equal to the distance between the conductive layer **114** and the core **110**. In a case where **t1** or **t2** is small and **w** is large, the characteristic impedance is low. In a case where **t1** or **t2** is large and **w** is small, the characteristic impedance is high. Although the characteristic impedance depends on the thickness of the conductive layer, the thickness of the conductive layer is ignored for the sake of simplicity of the description.

The multiple substrate may be mounted on a portable phone or the like. For the purpose of downsizing the portable phone, the multilayer substrates **100R** and **200R** should be thinned. This may be achieved by reducing the thicknesses **t1** and **t2**. However, reduced thicknesses **t1** and **t2** decrease the characteristic impedance. In order to keep the characteristic impedance equal to a predetermined value, which may be 50Ω , for example, the width **w** of the signal line **114a** may be reduced. The characteristic impedance is influenced by the

distance between the conductors. Thus, the distance **L1** between the signal line **114a** and the ground layer **114b** and the distance **L2** between the signal line **114a** and the ground layer **114c** may affect the characteristic impedance. In a case where the distances **L1** and **L2** are small, the characteristic impedance is low. In order to increase the characteristic impedance, it is preferable to reduce the influence of the ground layers **114b** and **114c** to the characteristic impedance. It is thus preferable that the distances **L1** and **L2** are twice the width of the signal line **114a** or more ($L1, L2 \geq 2w$).

As described above, a reduction in the line width **w** may realize a desired value of the characteristic impedance. However, if the line width **w** is too small, it may be difficult to achieve a satisfactory quality of the signal line **114a**. For example, in a case where the thicknesses **t1** and **t2** of the insulation layers **120** and **122** are $25\ \mu\text{m}$, and the dielectric constants thereof are 3.4, and where the core **110** and each of the conductive layers are made of copper, a characteristic impedance of 50Ω is realized by setting the line width **w** equal to $17\ \mu\text{m}$. However, it is difficult to form the signal line **114a** as narrow as $17\ \mu\text{m}$. In contrast, the signal line **114a** as wide as, for example, $30\ \mu\text{m}$ is formed easily, but the characteristic impedance of the strip line is 40Ω , which deviates from the desired value.

As described, when the core is made of a metal, it may be difficult to realize both a thinned multilayer substrate and a desired characteristic impedance. Now, a description is given of embodiments of the present invention with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Embodiment 1

FIG. **2** is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary multilayer substrate in accordance with an embodiment 1. In FIG. **2**, parts that are the same as those illustrated in FIGS. **1A** and **1B** are given the same reference numerals.

As illustrated in FIG. **2**, a multilayer substrate **100** includes a core **10**, conductive layers **12**~**18**, insulation layers **20**~**26** and the electronic component **30**. The multilayer substrate **100** is composed of multiple conductors having the core **10** and multiple insulation layers, which layers are vertically stacked.

The core **10** is thicker than the other conductive layers. The conductive layer **14** is adjacent to the core **10** so that the insulation layer (first insulation layer) **22** is interposed therebetween. The conductive layer **14** includes a signal line **14a** (first signal line), and ground layers **14b** and **14c** (second ground layers). The ground layers **14b** and **14c** are conductive layers located on the same plane as the signal line **14a**. The signal line **14a** is a conductive line through which the RF signal is transmitted. The core **10** has a through hole **11** in which the electronic component **30** is accommodated. A recess portion **10a** is formed on a surface of the core **10** that faces the signal line **14a**.

The conductive layer **12** is provided at the side of the signal line **14a** opposite to the side thereof at which the core **10** is provided, and is a ground layer (first ground layer) adjacent to the signal line **14a** through the insulation layer **20** (second insulation layer). The conductive layers **16** and **18** are located at the side of the core **10** opposite to the side thereof at which the signal line **14a** is provided. The conductive layers **16** and **18** include a line (a second signal line) through which a signal other than the RF signals is transmitted.

The recess portion **10a** is formed on the surface of the core **10** that faces the signal line **14a**. The thickness **t3** of the insulation layer **22** on the recess portion **10a**, that is, the distance between the signal line **14a** and the bottom of the recess portion **10a** is larger than the thickness **t2** of the insulation layer **122** illustrated in FIG. **1B**. The core **10**, the

conductive layers **12** and **14**, and the insulation layers **20** and **22** form a strip line. As described previously, as the thickness of the insulation layer increases, the characteristic impedance increases. The presence of the recess portion **10a** increases the thickness **t3** of the insulation layer **22** between the recess portion **10a** and the signal line **14a**. Thus, the embodiment 1 has an increased characteristic impedance. By changing the thicknesses **t1** and **t3**, it is possible to easily obtain a desired characteristic impedance. As described above, the multilayer substrate **100** is thinned and the line width **w** is set to a producible value, nevertheless the characteristic impedance can be increased due to the presence of the recess portion **10a**. It is thus possible to realize both thinning and a desired characteristic impedance. The core **10** made of a metal is interposed between the signal line **14a** and the conductive layer **16** and between the signal line **14a** and the conductive layer **18**. It is thus possible to suppress the interference between the signal that is transmitted through the signal line **14a** and the signal that is transmitted through the conductive layer **16** and the interference between the signal that is transmitted through the signal line **14a** and the signal that is transmitted through the conductive layer **18**.

In order to effectively secure the characteristic impedance, it is preferable to reduce the influence of the ground layers **14b** and **14c** to the characteristic impedance. It is thus preferable that the distances **L1** and **L2** are large. The distances **L1** and **L2** may be twice the line width **w**, or **2w**, or more. It is preferable to reduce an influence to the characteristic impedance from an area other than the recess portion **10a** of the core **10**. Thus, it is preferable to have a large distance **L3** between an area **R** define by vertically projecting a portion of the signal line **14a** surrounded by a broken line onto the core **10** and one of the opposite side surfaces of the recess portion **10a** in the cross section and a large distance **L4** between the area **R** and the other side surface of the recess portion **10a**. The distances **L3** and **L4** may be equal to or greater than **2w**.

A calculation of the characteristic impedance is now described. The multilayer substrate **100** illustrated in FIG. 2 was used as a sample, and the characteristic impedance of the sample was measured while the thickness **t3** was changed. The conditions for the calculation are as follows.

- t1**: 25 μm (**t1** is the thickness of the insulation layer **20**)
- t4**: 150 μm (**t4** is the thickness of the core **10**)
- w**: 30 μm (**w** is the line width of the signal line **14a**)
- L1, L2, L3, L4**: 60 μm (**L1**~**L4** are distances)
- dielectric constants of the insulation layers **20**~**26**: 3.4
- materials of the core **10** and conductive layers **12**~**18**: copper

FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating results of calculation of the characteristic impedance of the multilayer substrate in accordance with the embodiment 1. The horizontal axis denotes the thickness **t3**, and the vertical axis denotes the characteristic impedance.

As illustrated in FIG. 3, as the thickness **t3** becomes larger, the characteristic impedance becomes higher. When the thickness **t3** is nearly equal to 60 μm , the characteristic impedance is 50 Ω . When **t3** is nearly equal to 100 μm , the characteristic impedance is close to 55 Ω . By setting **t3** approximately equal to 37.5~75 μm (1.5~3 times the thickness **t1**), for example, it is possible to obtain a desired characteristic impedance.

The thickness of the core **10** is approximately 120 μm even when the recess portion **10a** is provided under the above-described conditions. Hence, the heat transfer performance and the mechanical strength are highly maintained. The recess portion **10a** may be defined by providing resist on the

core **10** except for an area in which the recess portion **10a** is to be formed and performing half etching.

Now, a variation of the embodiment 1 is described. FIG. 4A is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary multilayer substrate in accordance with a first variation of the embodiment 1.

Referring to FIG. 4A, a multilayer substrate **100a** is configured so that the distance **L1** between the signal line **14a** and the ground layer **14b** and the distance **L2** between the signal line **14a** and the ground layer **14c** are larger than the distances **L3** and **L4**, respectively. It is thus possible to reduce the influences of the ground layers **14b** and **14c** to the characteristic impedance and to obtain a desired characteristic impedance easily. The ground layers **14b** and **14c** provided at both sides of the signal line **14a** may be replaced by signal lines through which any signal other than the RF signal is transmitted. Like this example, the conductive layer **14** may include lines other than the signal line **14a**. By increasing the distances **L1** and **L2**, it is possible to suppress signal interference.

FIG. 4B is a cross-sectional view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with a second variation of the embodiment 1. As illustrated in FIG. 4B, a multilayer substrate **100b** does not include the conductive layer **12** and the insulation layer **20**. In other words, the conductive layer **14** is located on the upper surface of the multilayer substrate **100b**. The signal line **14a**, the ground layers **14b** and **14c** and the core **10** form a microstrip line, which is a kind of transmission line. The recess portion **10a** is formed in the core **10**. Thus, like the embodiment 1, it is possible to realize a desired characteristic impedance of the microstrip line.

Embodiment 2

An embodiment 2 is an exemplary module substrate. FIG. 5 is a block diagram of a multilayer substrate in accordance with the embodiment 2.

As illustrated in FIG. 5, a multilayer substrate **100** includes duplexers **40a**~**40f**, a filter circuit **50**, an IC (Integrated Circuit) **60**, power amplifiers **64a**~**64c**, and switches **70**~**74**. The multilayer substrate **200** is a module substrate used for an RF module **210**. The duplexer **40a** includes a reception filter **42**, a transmission filter **44**, a matching circuit **46** and a matching circuit **48**. Balanced output terminals of the reception filter **42** are connected to the matching circuit **46**. An unbalanced input terminal of the transmission filter **44** is connected to the matching circuit **48**. Each of the duplexers **40b**~**40f** has a configuration similar to that of the duplexer **40a**. The filter circuit **50** includes a filter **52** and a matching circuit **54**. Balanced output terminals of the filter **52** are connected to the matching circuit **54**. The IC **60** includes LNAs (Low Noise Amplifier) **62h**~**62j**. The IC **60** functions as a direct conversion transceiver that performs a frequency conversion.

The switch **70** is connected to an antenna **202**, the duplexers **40a**~**40f**, the filter circuit **50**, and the switches **72** and **74**. The common terminal of the reception filter **42** and the transmission filter **44** are connected to the antenna **202** via the switch **70**. The balanced output terminals of the duplexer **40a**, are connected to the LNA **62a** via the matching circuit **46**. The unbalanced output terminal of the duplexer **40a** is connected to the output terminal of the power amplifier **64a** via the matching circuit **48**.

The balanced output terminals of the duplexer **40b** are connected to the input terminals of the LNA **62b**. The unbalanced input terminal of the duplexer **40b** is connected to the switch **72**. The balanced output terminals of the duplexer **40c** are connected to the input terminals of the LNA **62a**. The unbalanced input terminal of the duplexer **40c** is connected to the switch **72**. The balanced output terminals of the filter circuit **50**, that is, the balanced output terminals of the

duplexer **40d** are connected to the input terminals of the LNA **62d**. The balanced output terminals of the duplexer **40d** are connected to the input terminals of the LNA **62e**. The unbalanced input terminal of the duplexer **40d** is connected to the switch **74**. The balanced output terminals of the duplexer **40e** are connected to the input terminals of the LNA **62f**. The unbalanced input terminal of the duplexer **40e** is connected to the switch **74**. The balanced output terminals of the duplexer **40f** are connected to the input terminals of the LNA **62g**. The unbalanced input terminal of the duplexer **40f** is connected to the switch **74**.

The input terminal of the power amplifier **64a** is connected to the output terminal of the VGA **62h**. The switch **72** is connected to the output terminal of the power amplifier **64b**. The input terminal of the power amplifier **64b** is connected to the output terminal of the VGA **62i**. The switch **74** is connected to the output terminal of the power amplifier **64c**. The input terminal of the power amplifier **64c** is connected to the output terminal of the VGA **62j**.

The antenna **202** receives and transmits RF signals. The duplexers **40a~40f** correspond to different bands. In accordance with the communication system and band to be used, the switch **70** selects any of the duplexers **40a~40f**, the filter circuit **50**, the switch **72** and the switch **74** and makes a connection with the antenna. The switch **72** selects any of the duplexer, **40b**, the duplexer **40c** and the switch **70** and makes a connection with the power amplifier **64b**. The switch **74** selects any of the duplexers **40d~40f** and the switch **70** and makes a connection with the power amplifier **64c**.

A description is given of a case where the duplexer **40a** and the antenna **202** are connected together. A reception signal received via the antenna **202** is input to the reception filter **42** of the duplexer **40a**. The reception filter **42** filters the reception signal, and outputs the filtered signal to the LNA **62a** via the matching circuit **46**. The LNA **62a** amplifies the reception signal. The IC **60** down converts the reception signal, which is an RF signal input to the LNA **62a**, into a baseband signal. The IC **60** up converts the transmission signal, which is a baseband signal, into an RF signal. The transmission signal obtained by up converting is amplified by the VGA **62h** and the power amplifier **64a**. The transmission signal thus amplified is input to the transmission filter **44** via the matching circuit **48**. The transmission filter **44** is output to the antenna **202** after filtered.

The duplexers **40b~40f** function like the duplexer **40a**. The filter **52** included in the filter circuit **50** filters the reception signal. The reception signal is output to the LNA **62d** via the matching circuit **54**. The filters included in the duplexers **40a~40f** and the filter circuit **50** may be acoustic wave filters such as SAW (Surface Acoustic Wave) filters, boundary acoustic wave filters or filters using FBARs (Film Bulk Acoustic Resonators).

A layer structure of the multilayer substrate **200** is described. FIG. **6** is a perspective view of the multilayer substrate **200** in accordance with the embodiment 2. FIG. **7A** is a plan view of the multilayer substrate **200** in accordance with the embodiment 2, and FIG. **7B** is a cross-sectional view of the multilayer substrate **200**. In FIGS. **6** and **7A**, the internal structure of the multilayer substrate **200** is illustrated so as to remove a part of the ground layer **12d** and are seen through the insulation layers **20~26**. FIG. **7B** illustrates a cross section seen in a direction indicated by an arrow in FIG. **6**.

As illustrated in FIGS. **6**, **7A** and **7B**, the multilayer substrate **200** includes the core **10**, the conductive layers **12~18**, the insulation layers **20~26**, the electronic component **30**, and via interconnections **32** and **34**. The conductive layer **12** includes signal lines **12a~12c** and a ground layer **12d**. The

conductive layer **14** includes a signal line **14a**, ground layers **14b** and **14c**, and signal lines **14d~14e**. The signal line **14a** is used to transmit the RF signal. The signal lines **12a~12c** and the signal lines **14d~14g** are used to transmit signals other than the RF signal. The conductive layers **16** and **18** include lines for any signal. Like the embodiment 1, the recess portion **10a** is provided in the area of the core **10** that faces the signal line **14a**.

The via interconnection **32** is connected to the electronic component **30**. The signal line **14d** is connected to the via interconnection **32**. The core **10** and the ground layers **14b** and **12d** are interconnected via the via interconnection **34**. The core **10** and the ground layers **14c** and **12d** are interconnected via the via interconnection **34**. The via interconnection **34** passes through, for example, the insulation layer **20** and/or the insulation layer **22**.

According to the embodiment 2, like the embodiment 1, it is possible to provide the multilayer substrate **100** capable of suppressing the signal interference and realizing thinning and a desired characteristic impedance. The structure of the multilayer substrate **200** as illustrated in FIGS. **6**, **7A** and **7B** is preferably provided between the IC **60** and each of the duplexers **40a~40f** and between the IC **60** and the filter circuit **50** illustrated in FIG. **5**. In other words, the strip line formed so as to include the core **10**, the signal line **14a**, the ground layer **12d** and the ground layers **14b** and **14c** is used to make connections between the IC **60** and the duplexers **40a~40f** and between the IC **60** and the filter circuit **50**. The duplexers **40a~40f** and the IC **60** may be mounted on or formed within the multilayer substrate. Balanced signals or unbalanced signals are transmitted through the above connections. One unbalanced signal is transmitted over one signal line **14a** illustrated in FIG. **6**. A pair of balanced signals is transmitted by using a differential strip line structure composed of the signal line **14a** and another signal line adjacent to and spaced apart from the signal line **14a**. It is thus possible to effectively reduce loss of the RF signal. The strip line may be provided to make connections between the antenna **202** and the switch **70**, those between the switch **70** and each of the duplexers **40a~40f** and the filter circuit **50**, and/or those between the duplexers **40a~40f** and the power amplifiers **64a~64c**. The multilayer substrate **200** is suitably applied to sections in which the RF signals received or transmitted via the antenna **202** are not subjected to frequency conversion, that is, the sections between the antenna **202** and the IC **60**. It is thus possible to reduce the loss of the RF signals.

The multilayer substrate may have one or a plurality of filters and/or one or a plurality of duplexers. It is to be noted that an RF module having multiple duplexers or filters as illustrated in FIG. **5** may have large wiring distances. The large wiring distances may increase the loss of signals, particularly, the loss of RF signals. Therefore, the multilayer substrate **200** is preferably used as a module substrate of an RF module having multiple duplexers or filters. In this case, the strip line formed by the core **10**, and the signal lines **14a**, **14b** and **14c** is connected to the multiple duplexers or filters. With this structure, it is possible to effectively reduce the loss of RF signals because of reduced distances between the parts built in the multilayer substrate. The multilayer substrate **200** may applied to modules other than the RF modules or electronic devices that handle RF signals.

In the embodiment 2, the conductive layer **14** includes the signal lines **14d~14g**. In order to suppress the signal interference between the signal line **14a** and each of the signal lines **14d~14g**, it is preferable to reduce the distance between the signal line **14a** and the ground layer **14b** and the distance between the signal line **14a** and the ground layer **14c** as large

as a decrease in the characteristic impedance is kept in a tolerable range. These distances may be equal to $2w$ where w is the width of the signal line **14a** or may be greater than $2w$ as in the case of the example illustrated in FIG. 4A. In order to suppress the signal interference, it is preferable to increase the distance between the signal line **14a** and each of the signal lines **14d~14f**. Particularly, in a case where the ground layers **14b** and **14c** are not provided, it is preferable to increase the distance between the signal lines. The widths of the signal lines **14d~14f** and those of the signal lines **12a~12c** may be equal to or different from the width of the signal line **14a**. The filters may be those other than the acoustic wave filters.

Embodiment 3

A third embodiment has an exemplary multilayer substrate using a spiral inductor. FIG. 8A is a plan view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with the third embodiment, and FIG. 8B is a cross-sectional view taken along a line A-A. In FIG. 8A, the ends of the recess portion **10a** are illustrated by broken lines.

Referring to FIGS. 8A and 8B, the signal line **14a** of a multilayer substrate **300** is a spiral inductor, and the whole spiral inductor faces the recess portion **10a**. A via interconnection **14i** is connected to the center of the signal line **14a**. The via interconnection **14i** passes through an opening in the core **10** and interconnects the signal line **14a** and a lead line **14h**. The lead line **14h** is located between the core **10** and the conductive layer **18**.

According to the third embodiment, by changing the depth of the recess portion **10a** and the thickness of the insulation layer **22**, it is possible to adjust the inductance of the signal line **14a** and obtain a desired inductance. For example, an increase in the distance between the signal line **14a** and the core **10** increases the inductance value. As compared with a case where the signal line **14a** is lengthened, the area occupied by the signal line **14a** is small. The opening formed in the core **10** is as small as the via interconnection **14i** passes through the core **10**. It is thus possible to suppress the signal interference between the signal line **14a** and the signal line in the conductive layer **16**.

The signal line **14a** and the lead line **14h** may be at the same side of the core **10** (the upper side in FIG. 8A). However, a signal interference between the signal line **14a** and the lead line **14h** may occur. The signal line **14a** and the lead line **14h** may have portions that interfere with each other and portions that do not interfere with each other. This situation makes it difficult to adjust the inductance and the impedance. It is thus preferable that the lead line **14h** is located at the side of the core **10** opposite to the side at which the signal line **14a** is provided. This arrangement makes it possible to suppress the signal interference and to secure a sufficient distance between the lead line **14h** and the core **10** and a sufficient distance between the lead line **14h** and the conductive layer **18** and easily adjust the inductance and the impedance.

Embodiment 4

An embodiment 4 is an exemplary multilayer substrate in which recess portions are formed on both sides of the core. FIG. 9A is a cross-sectional view of a multilayer substrate in accordance with the fourth embodiment.

Referring to FIG. 9A, the core of a multilayer substrate **400** has the recess portion **10a**, and another recess portion **10b** located on the side of the core opposite to the side thereof on which the recess portion **10a** is located. The signal line **14a** is provided so as to face the recess portion **10a**, and a signal line **15** (third signal line) is provided so as to face the recess portion **10b**. The signal line **15** is used to transmit the RF signal. The core **10** is connected to the ground layers **14b** and **14c** via the via interconnection **34** and to a ground layer included in the conductive layer **18**. According to the fourth embodiment, it is possible to obtain desired characteristic

impedances in the structure in which the signal lines are provided at both the sides of the core **10**. Since the signal line **15** is located at the side of the core opposite to the side thereof at which the signal line **14a** is provided, the signal interference between the signal line **14a** and the signal line **15** can be suppressed.

FIG. 9B is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary structure of the core of the multilayer substrate in accordance with the embodiment 4. As illustrated in FIG. 9B, the core **10** includes a metal plate **10d**, a metal plate **10c** bonded to the upper surface of the metal plate **10d**, and a metal plate **10e** bonded to the lower surface of the metal plate **10d**. An opening is formed in the metal plate **10c** so as to expose the metal plate **10d**. The recess portion **10a** is defined by bonding the metal plates **10c** and **10d**. Similarly, the recess portion **10b** is defined by bonding the metal plates **10d** and **10e**. The distances $L3$ and $L4$ illustrated in FIG. 2 can be adjusted by changing the lengths and widths of the openings. It is thus possible to adjust the characteristic impedances of the signal lines **14a** and **15**. The recess portions **10a** and **10b** may be formed by a half etching process of the core **10**. The core **10** having only the recess portion **10a** on the upper surface thereof employed in the embodiments 1~3 may be formed by bonding metal plates. The core **10** may not accommodate the electronic component **30**.

The present invention is not limited to the specifically described embodiments, but other embodiments and variations may be made within the claimed invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A RF module comprising:

a terminal connected to an antenna;

a core formed in a multilayer substrate configured by stacking conductive layers and insulation layers, the core being one of the conductive layers and serving as a ground layer;

a first signal line included in one of the conductive layers adjacent to the core so that a first insulation layer that is one of the insulation layers is interposed between the core and the first signal line, the first signal line being used for transmission of RF signals received and transmitted by the antenna; and

a filter that filters the RF signals,

wherein the core has a recess portion that faces the first signal line, an outline shape of the recess portion in a plan view being laterally extended in a direction along which the first signal line extends so as to follow the first signal line for at least a prescribed distance in the plan view.

2. The RF module according to claim 1, wherein the transmission line interconnects the filter and an integrated circuit that amplifies the RF signal.

3. The RF module according to claim 1, further comprising a duplexer,

wherein the transmission line formed by the core and the first signal line is connected to the duplexer.

4. The RF module according to claim 3, wherein the duplexer is connected to a switch that is connected to the antenna.

5. The RF module according to claim 1, further comprising a first ground layer included in the conductive layers, the first ground layer being provided at a side of the first signal line opposite to another side thereof at which the core is provided.

6. The RF module according to claim 1, wherein the core has a portion that accommodates at least part of an electronic component.

7. The RF module according to claim 5, wherein the first ground layer is adjacent to the first signal line so that a second insulation layer included in the insulation layers is interposed between the first ground layer and the first signal line.

8. The RF module according to claim 1, further comprising a second ground layer included in said one of the conductive layers in which the first signal line is also included, the second ground layer being located at both sides of the first signal line in a plan view.

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9. The RF module according to claim 8, wherein a distance between the second ground layer and the first signal line is equal to or greater than a distance between the first signal line and an edge of the recess portion in a plan view.

10. The RF module according to claim 1, further comprising a second signal line included in the conductive layers, the second signal line being provided at a side of the core opposite to another side thereof at which the first signal line is provided.

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11. The RF module according to claim 1, wherein the first signal line is a spiral inductor.

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12. The RF module according to claim 1, further comprising a third signal line provided at a side of a core opposite to another side thereof at which the first signal line is provided, the third signal line being used for transmission of an RF signal,

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wherein the core has another recess portion that faces the third signal line.

13. The RF module according to claim 1, wherein the core includes a first metal plate and a second metal plate bonded to the first metal plate, the first metal plate having an opening.

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